

VZCZCXRO7783
OO RUEHDBU RUEHPW
DE RUEHNO #0591/01 3090922
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 050922Z NOV 07
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1349
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0381
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0495

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000591

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: GENERAL LUTE, COUNSELOR COHEN AND DELEGATION SHARE
VIEWS FROM RECENT IRAQ, AFGHAN TRIP WITH SYG, LOOK AHEAD

Classified By: Charge Richard G. Olson, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. Deputy NSA for Iraq and Afghanistan LTG Douglas Lute and Counselor Eliot Cohen used an October 26 meeting with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to discuss their recent trip to Iraq and Afghanistan. State's Director for Policy Planning Dr. David Gordon and OSD DASD for Afghanistan Mitch Shivers accompanied. On Iraq, Lute and Cohen described lingering challenges with the central government, but encouraging progress in political accommodation at the tribal and provincial levels. Implying the ball was in the U.S. court, the SYG said that if NATO's Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) is to continue, a discussion at NATO HQ must begin soon. Prompted by Ambassador Nuland to address the present situation in northern Iraq, LTG Lute stated that U.S. intelligence assets in Iraq are focused primarily on the al-Qaeda threat, not the PKK in the north. The SYG stated that from a NATO perspective, more U.S. coverage of the PKK would be helpful - one more major attack by the PKK would push Turkey over the edge, he asserted. On Afghanistan, the SYG and LTG Lute agreed on the imperative to develop Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to hold ground that ISAF had cleared. The SYG stated that with UNAMA SRSF Koenigs leaving in February, the international community needed to put forward a candidate for the proposed international coordinator "gorilla" soon, or risk being overcome by events. The SYG also raised an upcoming report from Amnesty International that he expected would call on ISAF forces not to transfer detainees to the Afghan government, and noted the potential for future prisoner executions by the Afghan government to erode European support for ISAF. END SUMMARY.

Iraq - Looking Brighter, but whither NTM-I?

¶2. (C) LTG Lute told the SYG that most security and economic indicators of progress in Iraq were trending upwards of late. Security at the provincial and tribal levels had improved as a result of the "tribal awakening" against extremists - political accommodation at the grassroots level that began in Anbar province among Sunnis but which was also beginning to encompass Shiite communities. The lack of political progress within the Iraqi central government was a top U.S. priority, LTG Lute stated. The Secretary General asked for LTG Lute's take on NTM-I, based on his meetings with U.S. commanders. LTG Lute relayed that U.S. commanders had expressed

satisfaction with the quality of NATO's training efforts, and saw future possibilities for NATO involvement in building Iraqi army niche capabilities and in institutional training such as military academies and NCO schools. The Italian decision to provide gendarme training through NTM-I was useful, LTG Lute stated, and he also conveyed commanders' views that over the long-term, NATO involvement in developing mil-mil contacts between Iraqi and NATO armies through programs such as exchanges and schooling would be an important investment. The SYG stressed the need for a dialogue to begin as quickly as possible between U.S. commanders and NATO to factor in these ideas, as NTM-I under its present mandate was quickly winding down.

SYG: One more big PKK attack on Turkey, and "the balloon goes up"

13. (S) Ambassador Nuland asked LTG Lute to share with the Secretary General the latest U.S. thoughts on the situation

SIPDIS

in northern Iraq between Turkey and the PKK. The SYG noted that Turkey had not asked for formal NATO consultations, but regularly briefed him on the situation. One more big attack by the PKK on Turkish forces, he said, and the "balloon goes up," i.e. the internal political situation in Turkey will become unmanageable and force the Turkish government to take decisive action in northern Iraq. An Article 4 situation at NATO was also quite within the realm of possibility (note: Article 4 of the Washington Treaty reads: "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."). The SYG stated that

USNATO 00000591 002 OF 003

from a purely NATO perspective, a shift in U.S. intelligence assets to cover more PKK threats in the north would be helpful

14. (S) LTG Lute stated that U.S. intel efforts in Iraq are focused on the al-Qaeda threat, and any target shifts to the north would mean a zero-sum reduction in focus on al-Qaeda. This posed a problem, as did the fact that much of the U.S. effort in Iraq was built on sensitive HUMINT networks that had taken much time to develop and could not just be shifted around the country. Further, imagery intelligence had limits against the PKK, which largely blended into the civilian Kurdish population. LTG Lute noted that perhaps more could be done using existing signals intelligence networks.

Afghanistan: ANSF is the key, and "we need a name" for the gorilla

15. (C) Fresh off intense discussions of ANSF training and equipping led by Secretary of Defense Gates at the October 24-25 Noordwijk NATO Defense Ministerial, an exasperated SYG expressed frustration with weak Allied efforts thus far, Afghan government incapacity, and the cycle of ground cleared by ISAF being lost to insurgents due to the inability of ANSF to hold the territory. Neither President Karzai nor MOD Wardak knew the answer, he asserted. LTG Lute agreed that competent, well equipped ANSF, deployed in the right mix to each situation, were key to breaking the pattern of territory oscillating between ISAF and insurgent control. He told the SYG he would look closely at current targets for the size and composition of ANSF upon his return to Washington, with a view to determining if they were adequate or needed to be altered. He also said that there was a need to look at some of the positive lessons from the tribal awakening in Iraq, to explore how best to use Afghan tribal structures to fill some of the current policing voids. Counselor Cohen noted the size of the international coalition in Iraq (approximately 160K soldiers) dwarfed that in Afghanistan (approximately 50K), a

situation only exacerbated by the extreme poverty, infrastructure devastation, larger size, corruption, and pervasive narcotics challenges in Afghanistan.

¶16. (S) All agreed on the pressing need for a "gorilla," a prominent international figure to marshal and spur the oftentimes disparate efforts of national capitals into a more coordinated international assistance effort. "Tell Washington we need a name quickly," the SYG urged LTG Lute. UNAMA SRSG Koenigs is set to leave his post on February 1, at which time, the SYG speculated, it would be all too easy for a skeptical Ban Ki-Moon to appoint a successor to Koenigs, announce President Karzai's support, and effectively squash the idea for good.

¶17. (C) Noting an upcoming discussion among PermReps on October 30, the SYG pointed to a pending report by Amnesty International (AI) that is expected to express a lack of confidence in the Afghan legal system, and recommend ISAF forces not transfer detainees to the Afghan government. The AI report stands to create some difficulty with European parliaments. The SYG also pointed to the recent executions of convicted criminals by the Afghan government, and noting UK MOD Browne's comments to Ministers and the SYG in Noordwijk about "universal values," reinforced his belief that continued executions stood to erode European support for the ISAF mission. In response to questions by the Counselor and Dr. Gordon as to how the U.S. can help Europe understand the big picture and the stakes of failure in Afghanistan, the SYG asked for help with resources to obtain the modern communications equipment necessary to get NATO's story out to the European public, and the need to continue engaging nations such as Italy and Spain to convince leaders that ISAF was more than a traditional UN "blue helmet" mission. NATO Spokesman Appathurai stressed the need to press European leaders to speak out in defense of the ISAF mission, which many are loathe to do for domestic political reasons.

¶18. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.

USNATO 00000591 003 OF 003

Ambassador Victoria Nuland
LTG Douglas Lute
Counselor Eliot Cohen
S/P David Gordon
DASD/Afghanistan Mitchell Shivers
C COS COL Stephen Ganyard
John Cockrell, USNATO notetaker

NATO

Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

SIPDIS
ASG Operations Martin Howard
Private Office Director Henne Schuwer
NATO Spokesman James Appathurai
NATO Private Office Policy Planning Chief Jamie Shea
Private Office Deputy Director Lisa Johnson

¶18. (U) LTG Lute and Counselor Cohen have cleared this message.
OLSON